

# Industrial heritage: Can Ribas

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Neighborhood revitalization and preserving the elements of industrial heritage are the aims of this **urban project** being undertaken in the La Soledat area of Palma, Majorca. Proposal is being developed in several stages after winning the open competition in 2005 and consisting in urban general development, public spaces, industrial heritage restoration and new social housing.

Dedicated to the production of wool blanket Can Ribas factory was built in 1851 outside the city. Later on, in 1945, the factory and peripheral core of La Soledat would be merged into the expansion areas, although in the 1970s, after several extensions and transformations, the factory became obsolete and fell into disuse. At the same time important changes occurred in the surroundings: a large social housing development was built and the power station of Son Molines went up in 1965, creating a new barrier that further increased the quarter's physical isolation.

The later attempts to redevelop the area were unsuccessful in halting the process of decay, so in 2003 a special plan for the whole waterfront was approved. The plan included the Levante and La Soledat neighborhoods to boost the effect of the different actions undertaken. Since it was organized as a closed precinct, the factory of Can Ribas had become a barrier dividing La Soledat into two, and this encouraged to call a competition in 2005 for the redevelopment of the public spaces, the refurbishment of the main building of Can Ribas and the construction of social housing.

The first phase has already established a public area around the main factory building and the chimney, connecting two empty spaces and eliminating traffic along Ferriol Street. Furthermore, it inverts the main access to the civic center in the building, placing it in the new plaza. The factory and the chimney were the only listed elements. For this reason the buildings affected by the new street have been partially demolished. In developing the project, however, the most valuable heritage elements have been recovered and will be integrated into the urban surroundings. The creation of an urban porch in the remaining part of the main building, the steam pavilion and the façade of another one of the warehouses emphasize the value of this industrial complex that comprised several pavilions for the different stages of the textile manufacturing process. The new arrangement of the public open spaces is organized by a concrete plinth connecting new Brotad Street with the preserved elements of the factory, generating a richer and more complex space paved with bands of quartzite stone combined with cast concrete slabs.

The incorporation of the urban porch, the steam pavilion and the wall of another warehouse enables recognition of the value of the industrial area. A system of open public spaces is thus structured by a concrete foundation, which serves to create a visual and physical connection between the new Brotad Street and the historic elements of the Can Ribas factory generating a richer, more complex public space.